

Safety

is No Accident

May 1996

Hurricane season
begins June 1

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JSC employees must prepare for potential emergencies

Protecting the health and safety of people is the first priority during an emergency, according to JSC's Emergency Preparedness Manager Keith McQuary. "But emergency personnel can't be everywhere and do everything."

"In a crisis, each individual must know how to respond," he said. "Knowing what to do is the best way to protect themselves and their family. Being responsible means being prepared. It could be the difference between life or death."

In many, but not all cases, the simplest approach to protection is evacuation.

"In the case of fire, an immediate evacuation to a predetermined area away from the endangered facility may be necessary," said McQuary. "In a hurricane, evacuation could involve the entire community and take place over a period of days. In some emergencies such as a tornado warning, or a chemical spill, the best means of protection would be to take shelter within any available facility."

Experience has shown that organizations and people who prepare for an emergency *before* it happens have the best opportunity of survival and to restore normal operations quickly. That's why practicing for an emergency is so important, McQuary said.

JSC managers and employees conducted two exercises last month which are reported elsewhere in this issue on the *Safety is No Accident* page. The first exercise, on April 15, simulated an explosion during a manned test in Bldg. 32. The second exercise took place on April 22 and simulated an aircraft mishap at Ellington Field.

"Highlighting the need for emergency preparedness when no emergency exists is not simple," McQuary said. "However, both exercises were very successful and highlighted the ability

of city and center organizations to coordinate response efforts and cooperate to achieve mutual goals—protecting employees from injury and restoring normal operations."

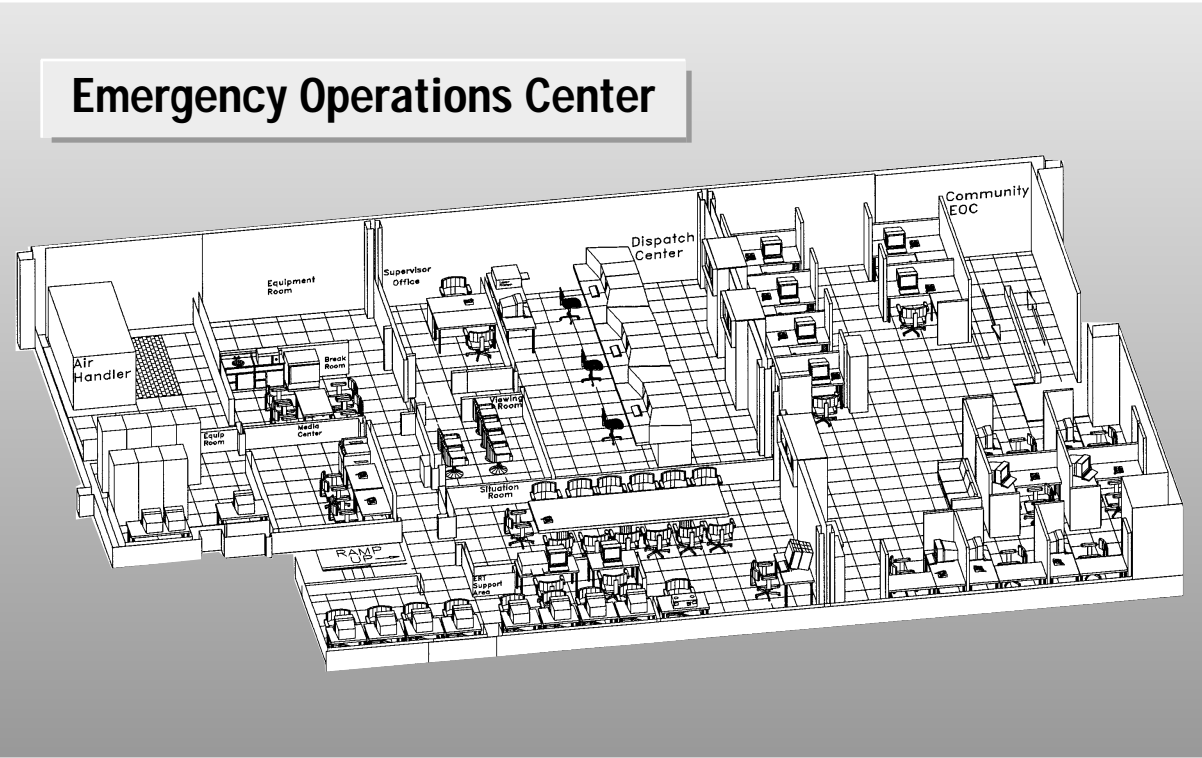
An effective emergency program must be able to warn employees that a disaster is on the way. JSC installed an employee warning system last year to warn employees who are outdoors of danger from incidents such as tornadoes or a chemical release. The system also has a distinctive siren for conventional or nuclear attack, as mandated by law.

The Image Services Branch has developed a video called *JSC Emergency Response Plan* to explain to employees how they will be warned of an emergency and how to protect themselves.

Providing information on what to do in a crisis is as important as alerting people to the crisis, McQuary said. The JSC Emergency Operations

Center in Bldg. 30 allows center emergency personnel to coordinate response and recovery efforts and inform employees and the community about incidents.

In a related area, JSC is putting the finishing touches on an upgraded, comprehensive, state-of-the-art EOC to be shared with community partners in the event of an emergency threatening the upper Texas Gulf Coast. In such a serious emergency, the EOC will be staffed by the JSC Emergency Response Team—JSC emergency preparedness manager and coordinator, Security, Fire Protection, Public Affairs, Plant Engineering, Medical and Industrial Hygiene, Communications and Environmental Services. The Hurricane Rideout Team—that includes a variety of employees from JSC—also will use the EOC whenever the Hurricane Command Post is activated by the Center Operations Director.



Just in time for the 1996 hurricane season, the new 4,000 square foot facility in Bldg. 30 features a computerized security operations center, an emergency response team support area, a weather console and a communication room for use by surrounding communities.

Emergency team members train to ensure employee safety at JSC

Although JSC is doing its utmost to protect against serious accidents, the possibilities are still real and JSC's Emergency Response Team has trained extensively to handle any emergency situation.

Depending on the level of the emergency, several organizations must work together to coordinate the response, control a scene, remove the hazard, ensure employee safety and report the incident to appropriate authorities.

"JSC's emergency response team is prepared to handle all types of emergencies," said Keith McQuary, JSC's emergency preparedness manager. "Nearly all JSC organizations must come together, no one goes off to do their own thing."

Emergencies can involve Flight Crew Operations, Center Operations, Safety Reliability and Quality Assurance, Information Systems, Space and Life Sciences, the NOAA National Weather Service and the Office of Public Affairs.

JSC uses an Incident Command System similar to those found in large cities to control situations. A team member from each organization attends an initial 40-hour training session at the Safety Learning Center with certified HazMat experts. Any one of the team members can perform the duty of incident commander and coordinate operations in the event of an emergency. Team members maintain their certification each year with a refresher course.

New emergency training video available

A new video is now available to help employees understand JSC's emergency warning systems.

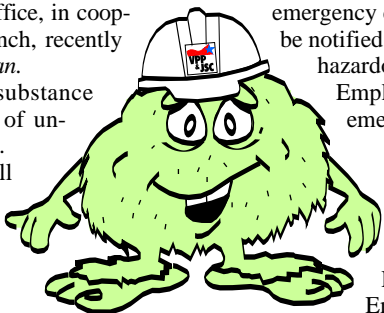
The JSC Emergency Preparedness Office, in cooperation with the Imagery Services Branch, recently completed *JSC Emergency Response Plan*.

The plan deals with hazardous substance releases and spills. It is used in case of unscheduled hazardous substance releases.

The ERP describes how chemical spill emergencies or hazards will be responded to at the center, and provides information on how employees can protect themselves when there is an unscheduled release or spill.

The video condenses the JSC Emergency Response Plan into a 10-minute explanation of how to report a fire or emergency chemical release, and how employees will be notified of a fire in their building—fire alarm—or hazardous release or tornado in the vicinity—Employee Warning System. It also explains emergency responses to such incidents.

The video will be broadcast daily, June 3-7, at 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., on channel 43 of the JSC Television Distribution System. VHS videocassette copies of the program are available for loan by calling the Safety Learning Center at x36369 or the JSC Emergency Preparedness Office at x34249.



JSC builds new emergency center

By Karen Schmidt

A new state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center is now up and running to support JSC emergency procedures from one location.

Just in time for the 1996 hurricane season, the new 4,000 square foot facility in Bldg. 30 features a computerized security operations center, an emergency response team support area, a weather console and a communication room for use by the surrounding communities.

"The new facility significantly strengthens the center's capability to respond to emergencies and to help ensure our employees' safety," said JSC Director George Abbey.

The center also has been equipped to accommodate the surrounding communities near JSC.

"If a storm or industrial accident threatens the area, we can offer a well-equipped, centrally located facility from which a coordinated response and recovery can be managed," said Abbey.

The new security operations center features a system that integrates JSC's security and fire protection functions into one computer system. It automatically monitors fire alarms, security entrances and external cameras. The system also features computer aided dispatch and automated event recording. When an employee dials the JSC emergency number, x33333, the computer displays the location on a screen. The security operations center is also capable of interpreting more than 140 different languages through a subscription service to provide the best possible emergency service to JSC's multicultural workforce.

Another new feature of the security operations center is a system for displaying emergency information messages over the JSC Television System to keep employees informed.

"JSC places a high premium on safety," said Keith McQuary, JSC emergency preparedness manager. "The new EOC allows JSC to strengthen safety further and extend it to include the neighboring communities and industries of the Gulf Coast area."

"More than one third of the new EOC is designated for community emergency personnel," McQuary said. The facility will be equipped with telephone and fax lines, radio connections, computers and extra ports, copy machines and partitioned offices.

"By sharing these resources, JSC hopes to further facilitate and expedite the crucial work done by community emergency teams," McQuary said.

The JSC Emergency Response Team also has a home in the new EOC. In the event of an actual emergency the ERT can coordinate efforts to reduce employee risk and initiate recovery operations. The ERT—responsible for incident management, employee and environmental safety—will have computers, phones, faxes and televisions to ensure information and resources are available and an emergency is handled as quickly as possible.

The new center also has a weather console to continuously monitor data from the Meteorological Interactive Data Display System at JSC.

"Whether there is a medical emergency, an explosion or a hurricane is about to make landfall, the EOC is geared to handles all types of emergencies at all levels," McQuary said.



The new Emergency Operations Center features a state-of-the-art computer system that can track any emergency call in any building at JSC. Patterened after the new Mission Control Center, the mini-Mission Control ensures employees safety around the center.